

Monica Ros School
Application for Waiver to Reopen School
8-9-2020
Revised 9-3-2020

Elementary School Reopening Plans

Please confirm that elementary school reopening plan(s) addressing the following, consistent with guidance from the California Department of Public Health and the local health department, have been published on the website of the local educational agency (or equivalent):

Cleaning and Disinfection: How shared surfaces will be regularly cleaned and disinfected and how use of shared items will be minimized.

Our preschool students have already returned to school. Our cleaning and disinfecting procedures have been going smoothly and we have created a schedule which allows for the addition of our school age students.

Our custodial schedule takes place during the school day and after students and staff have left for the day. We have purchased an electrostatic sprayer. Classrooms, playground areas and bathrooms are disinfected everyday and also before use by each cohort of students with the sprayer. Disinfectant sprayers are also available for use.

Surfaces that are touched often such as door knobs, chairs, tables, light switches, countertops, sinks and toilets are cleaned hourly.

Playground toys are disinfected by spraying with 70% alcohol solution after every use.

Each student has a labeled bucket of classroom materials and supplies for their sole use. Items shared in class will be kept to a minimum and they will be cleaned and disinfected before each use.

Cohorting: How students will be kept in small, stable, groups with fixed membership that stay together for all activities (e.g., instruction, lunch, recess) and minimize/avoid contact with other groups or individuals who are not part of the cohort.

Each of our cohorts or cohorts is assigned to a classroom and a bathroom for their sole use. cohorts will not mix at any time during the day. Arrival, departure, recess, and lunch periods are staggered so they will not mix at the entrance/exit, on their way to class or playground. After school care and activities will take place among the classroom cohorts.

Our cohorts consist of up to 12 students and 2 adults, each. cohorts under 10 will have one supervising adult. The cohorts are unchanging day to day. When the cohorts move to the playground, they are supervised outside by one (under 10 students) or two other adults (10 to 12 students) so that the Supervising Adults may have their break.

After school, the students who stay will remain in the same cohort outside with one of the outdoor staff members.

Our cohorts will stay together for art, performance, library, PE and will be taught in accordance with the VCPH guidelines. At this time, it seems like those classes have to be held outside with everyone masked and distancing, if at all. As further guidance is distributed, our Planning Recovery Team will consider and guide the school.

Entrance, Egress, and Movement Within the School: How movement of students, staff, and caregivers will be managed to avoid close contact and/or mixing of cohorts.

We have two gates available for use. Each gate will be staffed. Arrival and departure times are staggered by 15 minutes. We are already using this procedure for our younger students and it is working well.

We have separate paths through campus for each cohort so their paths don't cross on their way to the classrooms. During the staggered recesses, we spend 10 minutes disinfecting the playground after one group leaves and before the next group comes so they don't cross paths.

Face Coverings and Other Essential Protective Gear: How CDPH's face covering requirements will be satisfied and enforced.

Students in K-2 are strongly encouraged and all adults on campus plus 3rd graders (our oldest student) are required to wear a mask. Our school policy is that everyone on campus, all students, all faculty, all staff, anyone waiting in the parking lot will be required to wear a mask. Our policy has been in effect for the preschoolers on campus and working well. We also have face shields available for everyone who wishes to wear one in conjunction with a mask. We have gloves available for use.

All staff has been educated through our regularly scheduled beginning the year meetings regarding masks, purpose, efficacy, how to wear, how to clean, how to remove, how to place them on the face. And, to wash hands after placing, removing or touching a mask.

Families have been instructed through information available from the CDC that the school shared with them. Daily instructions are also available to families through the Kinsa app.

Students who are unwilling to wear masks will be guided gently and without stigma. Families have been asked to practice wearing masks so we can open with mask wearing not being an issue. Our younger students currently on campus have not had any difficulty after a little encouragement. Students for whom it is unsafe to wear a mask will be asked to bring a note from their doctor. They will be asked to wear a face shield and be carefully monitored for social distancing.

Staff will instruct the students about the mask protocols they have learned that are specified above.

Every employee at school is currently certified for first aid and CPR.

Health Screenings for Students and Staff: How students and staff will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and how ill students or staff will be separated from others and sent home immediately.

We are using Kinsa Thermometers and the Kinsa App so that students and staff will report their temperature and health screening daily before their arrival at school. The App alerts the school about those who have forgotten and they can be asked to complete the procedure in their car.

Any person of any age will be unable to enter or stay on campus with a temperature higher than 99.5 regardless of the method of taking the temperature. .

If students and staff become ill while they are at school they will be sent home immediately. Teachers may leave directly from their classroom after calling the office to send a substitute. Any of the administrative staff will be available to substitute for the rest of the day. Students who are waiting to be picked up by their caregivers will wait on a cot in a closed office with a full glass door inside the administrative office. If they need company, the director will stay with them. Our school is very small and we don't have a health office.

Anyone who is symptomatic will be sent home and tested for COVID, prior to coming back to campus. If their test is negative and they haven't been exposed to a known case, they can return to class 24 hours after symptoms resolve without the use of fever-reducing medication

Healthy Hygiene Practices: The availability of handwashing stations and hand sanitizer, and how their use will be promoted and incorporated into routines.

Students will be asked to apply hand sanitizer as they enter campus and to wash hands every time they enter their room, cough or sneeze, before and after eating, after touching their mask, and before leaving the room to go to another location. Each classroom has a sink in the classroom or very close by.

Students will be trained in appropriate hand-washing technique and cough etiquette, (we've been doing that for years), social distancing and self-health screening before they arrive at school through teleconferencing and after they come to campus in classroom meetings. . At times when the group is all handwashing (like on their way to an eating period or returning to the classroom from recess, we will supervise hand washing and make reinforce distancing.

Besides bathroom sinks, we have three outdoor sinks and two handwashing stations located near the playground lunch area.

Identification and Tracing of Contacts: Actions that staff will take when there is a confirmed case.

We will identify by direction information through caregivers, and by investigating the reasons for school absence and the source of illness at school or at home.

We have asked caregivers to inform us of any COVID symptoms and to commit to testing and receiving a negative outcome before returning to school.

Daily we will surveill attendance.

Before entering campus, every student and staff member undergoes a health screening and temperature test. The temperature must be under 99.5. Once the arrival to school time

has passed, the school office manager and the parking lot arrival supervisor ascertain who is not at school.

Caregivers are called to determine the reason for absence. If COVID symptoms are involved, the caregiver must have the student tested and receive a negative test before they return to school making sure that there is not an opportunity for ongoing exposure by a household member.

Caregivers are also asked to report any close contact the students has had with a person who has tested positive.

If any member of our community reports a positive test, our school liaisons will begin by identifying everyone who has had contact with the person with the confirmed case: cohort members' caregivers, teachers, ancillary staff. The VCPH and each person (or caregiver of person) will be informed immediately. (See communication below.)

Everyone who has had contact with the person with the confirmed case will be asked to leave school immediately (or to not come to school).

Parents and legal guardians have been informed of our intention to disclose the identities of persons with positive test results to VCPH and those with whom they have had close contact.

The identity of the patient or other identifying information will not be revealed, alluded to, or confirmed by the contact tracer, even if explicitly asked by a contact.

All those affected will be required to submit to a COVID-19 test. Staff and students who have been exposed may return to school after 72 hours if they have a negative test. Those who test positive may return to school 14 days.

Confirm that the school(s) have designated staff persons to support contact tracing, such as creation and submission of lists of exposed students and staff to the local health department and notification of exposed persons. Each school must designate a person for the local health department to contact about COVID-19.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/contact-tracing.html>

Our two school liaisons are:

Susan Hardenbergh, Director, shardenbergh@moniaros.org 805 646 8184 (school) , 805 746 5398 (c)

Suzanne Feldman, Assistant Director, sfeldman@monicaros.org, 805 646 8184 (school) 805 729 0614 (c) will be in charge of contact tracing within the school, notifying people or caregivers of people who have been exposed to the virus (in close contact for 10 minutes), and reporting to VCPH.

Both liaisons will undergo contact tracing training recommended by VCPH.

<https://www.train.org/main/course/1091302/compilation>

https://learn.astho.org/p/ContactTracer#tab-product_tab_overview

Both are familiar with the August 31, 2020 CDC release Contact Tracing for Covid-19.

We are prepared to give rapid notification of exposure, interview all close contacts, offer quarantine and isolation instructions, testing instructions, identify any isolation help or needs on the part of contacts, offer daily medical monitoring through length of quarantine, let contacts know when they have been released from monitoring. All communication will be through text or phone.

Physical Distancing: How space and routines will be arranged to allow for physical distancing of students and staff.

The parking lot has been marked for physical distancing. Places on campus where school age children line up will be marked to aid in physical distancing. We don't have any hallways.

Classroom space is large enough for our cohorts of up to 12 and two teachers to maintain 6 feet of physical distancing. We also have several outdoor areas to use as classrooms. Our schedules prevent groups from passing each other. Our school buildings all open to the outside. We don't have any indoor corridors. There are two vestibules on campus, but only one cohort will be using each one.

Desks will be placed 6 feet apart facing in the same direction. Everyone's school supplies are stored individually next to their desks.

Staff Training and Family Education: How staff will be trained and families will be educated on the application and enforcement of the plan.

Our caregiver and staff communication and training has taken place through Parents Square, a communication app that serves caregivers and staff. We have also engaged in teleconferencing with staff and caregivers and sent informational materials home. We also have information signs up in the parking lot and around school, both indoors and out. These communications have covered CDC best practices including handwashing, cough protocol, mask wearing, distancing, staying home, health screening, how to use our Kinsa thermometers.

Our orientation will take place before school starts one family at a time so that we can give direct instruction about entering and exiting school and about the Kinsa thermometer and health screening.

We have been sharing CDC and State of California and Ventura County Public Health Information steadily with staff and families.

As we began to prepare for the school year, our staff attended a COVID training explaining the ways that COVID is spread and the impact of droplets both in the air and on surfaces. We discussed the ways that masks, face shields and gloves can keep us safe by keeping the virus away from our eyes, nose and mouth where the virus can enter and make us sick.

Gloves can be effective to prevent the virus from traveling by our touch as long as we don't touch our face or an infected surface with the gloves on. Still, there are activities where gloves can be helpful protection like serving food or putting away library books.

We discussed the way that masks prevent our own respiratory droplets from traveling to other people and what healthy practices and operations the CDC recommends.

We discussed how the Kinsa thermometers are used, that they are helpful making sure that staff and student families are able to follow the health screenings and be reminded of each COVID symptom everyday when they use the app.

We informed our staff that sick children will be isolated in the office building in an office that has a glass door from which the rest of the office is easily seen.

We discussed how to instruct children to keep their masks on, sneeze into their elbows or a tissue, wash hands after sneezing, help them learn how to socially distance.

We explained why classroom protocols ensure that our cohorts maintain their isolation from other cohorts and how it helps us in contact tracing if any one tests positive for COVID.

The teaching staff is responsible for wiping down often touched surfaces hourly and when materials like iPads, change hands. The cleaning staff is responsible for disinfecting our classrooms after each day. The playground staff is responsible for disinfecting the playground between uses. The cleaning staff understands that surfaces must be wiped off first to make sure that the virus is not protected under surface dirt.

We have had informational emails and teleconferences with caregivers about the COVID protocols we will use at school, why temperature and health screenings are so important, and how to assess risk. With their participation in the Kinsa app, they have been informed that we will be able to understand if we have a symptom spike, and if there is a symptom spike in the area. They have been informed about washing hands, masks, sneeze and cough protocols, social distancing, keeping away from gatherings.

Our caregivers have been asked to stay at home when they are sick, not attend gatherings, not travel and, also, to consider that sports practices, neighborhood play, visitors, family reunions are high risk activities.

We have explained to our caregivers why the cohort system keeps students safe at school and asked them to consider leaving students to stay at school.

We have also discussed why negative testing helps us move forward with our plans and how positive testing allows us to know where the virus is concentrated and which cohorts are at risk.

We have shared with caregivers and faculty all the information from the CDC, the State of California and Ventura County regarding not only COVID but also about how to prepare for the return to school.

At the school entrance, students will use hand sanitizer and be told that keeping our hands clean is the first step in keeping ourselves healthy.

In the classroom they'll be taught that:

- We keep our hands off our faces because germs can enter through the eyes, nose and mouth.

- We cover our faces with cloth masks because our sneezes and coughs and even laughter and shouting can send germs into the air where they can enter the eyes, nose and mouth of our classmates and teachers.
- We socially distance so that it's harder for germs to spread between us.
- When we cough, we should cough into our elbow and then go wash our hands.
- We wash our hands when we cough, touch our face, enter or leave a room, before and after eating, touch something that other people have touched.
- Germs can spread from person to person when we touch things like school supplies. To stop that, we'll all have our own school supplies and we need to be very careful only to use our own.

On the playground and all around campus, there are signs about social distancing and staff will be present helping children understand what social distancing and how it can keep us safe by preventing the virus from traveling from person to person.

Testing of Students and Staff: How school officials will ensure that students and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 will be rapidly tested and what instructions they will be given while waiting for test results. Describe how staff will be tested periodically to detect asymptomatic infections.

Our caregivers have agreed that they will test their children who have virus symptoms or who have been in close contact with a person with COVID or who have been in a crowd. We have informed families that there are various testing facilities in our local area and how to find those on the internet. Our preschool families who are on campus now have been asked to undergo testing upon returning from travel or after a COVID symptom or if they've been in close contact with someone who has tested positive. They have been able to comply without trouble.

For staff, our neighbor, The Thacher School has a testing site on campus and has agreed to rapid test our staff when required. They will return to school after a negative test or stay home for 14 days after a positive test.

Triggers for Switching to Distance Learning: The criteria the superintendent will use to determine when to physically close the school and prohibit in-person instruction.

The school will consult with VCPH prior to any school closure, option for distance learning or other means of non-classroom-based instruction. We will consult with VCPH before closing any portion or the entirety of the school.

We are currently teaching school-age children online. After the students return to school, we will continue to accommodate any student online who does not wish to return to campus. We have some distance options for staff who do not wish to return to campus.

We have planned to follow the CDC guidelines for school closure which depend on the strength of COVID-19 in the community.

If the VCHD agrees in consultation, if 5% of our students and staff test positive, we will close school for one week and then allow those who have tested negative return to school keeping in mind that the testing should wait a few days for it to gain enough replication for recognition.

Communication Plans: How the superintendent will communicate with students, staff, and caregivers about cases and exposures at the school, consistent with privacy requirements such as FERPA and HIPAA.

HIPPA and FERPA

We will follow the privacy requirements codified in HIPAA and FERPA and meet the health and safety needs of our community during this health emergency. Under HIPAA and FERPA, we are allowed to disclose personal identity information (PII) to VCPH under the “health or safety emergency” exception, if the public health agency’s knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of students or other individuals. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(I); 34 C.F.R. §§ 99.31(a)(10) and 99.36. See also US HSS March 2020 Bulletin <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/hipaa-and-covid-19-limited-hipaa-waiver-bulletin-508.pdf>

We will not communicate PII to any other agency or person.

Communication:

To communicate a close contact with a person testing positive for COVID-19 with the family of one of our students or an employee of the school, we will make a phone call. If we are unable to communicate by phone, we will use a private messaging system through our communication app Parent Square. Every family is registered on Parent Square and receives school information in that way. The communication will take place as soon as possible within 24 hours.

Members of the school community will only be apprised of positive tests insofar as they have occurred, but PII will not be revealed. If a cohort is excused from school for testing, only the cohort families will be notified.

If positive test results return, the community will be advised that there was a positive test in the community and that contact tracing will occur and contacts notified privately.

We will work in cooperation with VCPH.

Planning Recovery Team

Our Planning Recovery Team is made up of one doctor, Emily Benson; two hospital administrators, Haady Lashkari and Lisa Griffiths; Jasmine Dalto, a teacher and caregiver; caregiver Pilar Lopez, and our Ventura County Public Health Department Liaisons, Susan Hardenbergh and Suzanne Feldman. Many of this committee served as our Back to School Committee. They will review and revise our current plan to meet changes in state guidance as they occur. We will meet every two weeks.

Commitment to Continuing Communication and Receiving Information regarding COVID-19

Through our school liaisons, we commit to using VCPH Sharepoint for local guidance, for referring daily to <https://www.vcemergency.com/> so we can understand the spread of the disease in Ventura County, and to using COVIDschools@ventura.org. Every two weeks we commit to providing our staff and parents with new information.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Hardenbergh
Director
Monica Ros School